



CONCUSSION RECOGNITION & MANAGEMENT GUIDELINES

FOR PARENTS

Concussion is a mild brain injury, caused by trauma that results in temporary dysfunction of the brain. When it occurs a child may experience symptoms and temporary loss of brain skills such as memory and thinking abilities. It is important for parents of young athletes to be aware of possible signs of concussion which are often subtle.

The trauma causing concussion can sometimes be obvious, but at other times may be very subtle and hardly noticed. If there are some symptoms or signs of concussion, ask your child or an adult who **was** present whether they were unconscious, dazed or confused at the time of the incident. If a child with concussion returns to sport whilst still symptomatic, there is increased risk of further injury to the child. **Therefore, no player who has concussion, or suspected of having concussion, should return to their sporting activity (training or playing) until cleared by a doctor.**

Some of the possible symptoms of concussion:

- Headache
- Blurred vision
- Dizziness
- Feeling like being in a fog
- Memory loss
- Fatigue
- Nausea or vomiting

Some of the signs you may observe:

- Slow to get up
- Dazed or vacant look
- Clutching or holding head
- Confusion
- Balance problems
- Irritability

If you observe any of these symptoms or signs see a doctor as soon as possible.

If you observe deterioration in these symptoms or signs go immediately to an accident and emergency department at your nearest hospital.

Progression and Management

As a temporary brain dysfunction, concussion will resolve with time. This may vary from an hour or so to several days. Occasionally the brain will recover even more slowly.

The best treatment is physical and cognitive rest (i.e no school, TV, computer games). The child should be seen by a doctor who will monitor the symptoms, signs and brain functioning. The doctor will determine when the child may return to school. The child must not return to sport until after a successful return to school and learning. **The doctor must clear the child to return to sporting activity** and this will usually involve a stepped approach with gradual increase in activities over a few days.

The doctor may arrange a specialist opinion (if the concussion is slow to resolve) or cognitive testing (brain functioning).

If at any stage the symptoms or signs are getting worse seek urgent medical attention.

Key Messages

- 1. Concussion is a temporary dysfunction of the brain following trauma**
- 2. Suspect concussion if your child is irritable, complains of a headache, is sick, extensively fatigued or just not themselves**
- 3. Seek medical attention – urgently if the symptoms or signs are getting worse**
- 4. Rest is the best treatment followed by a return to school, before a gradual return to physical activity**